

THE Out-of-Body EXPERIENCE

-An Interview With Robert A. Monroe-

By Calvin Winston

For as long as humankind can remember, we have questioned what happens when we die? We speak of "going home," Heaven, Nirvana, etc., and countless religions have been formed over eons to regulate the answers. In our search, some of us have discovered fibers of similarities to the process in most religions, although their mythological presentations have become ingrained belief-systems to many, even causing wars over the methods.

In this century—the last of this millennium—there has been scientific investigation, commonly called parapsychology, which has documented and researched such subjects as reincarnation, other dimensions of existence, soul travel and altered states of consciousness. Many of these investigations embrace the essential metaphysical techniques of religious and spiritual paths.

In 1958, Robert A. Monroe had an experience which would change the direction of his life forever, and I am not figuratively speaking.

As president and chief executive officer of the successful Monroe In-

dustries (radio & TV broadcasting), he had, two years before, in 1956, started a research division in his company that focused on sleep disorders, sleep patterns, learning and altered

his work. In fact, although he could easily use words like soul, karma, God, etc., in his conversations, he chooses to identify words, processes and situations with simple scientific labels like the "M Field," "Wave 1," "Focus 12," etc.

Hundreds of thousands of people have attended the institute's *Gateway* in Virginia, and this past month, *The Wall Street Journal* devoted a front-page story to his work, publicly stating that many corporate executives, from companies such a Dupont and the U.S Army's Intelligence Agency have sent representatives to Monroe's programs. Even Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island has attended the Institute's programs. For information write: The Monroe Institute, Rt 1, Box 175, Faber, VA 22938.

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NF: Today, more people than ever seem to be talking about going beyond the physical plane. Books dealing with near-death experiences, and out-of-body experiences are on the best seller lists, and Hollywood has recently given us countless films on the subject. You are, by acclama-

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states of consciousness. In many experiments—using sound to induce changes in brain-wave patterns—Monroe used himself as the subject.

He was never, and is not now, a religious man, and prefers to not to discuss religious philosophy, except to show the obvious relationship to

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tion, the leader in the field of out-of-body experiences. Tell us how you got involved.*

RM: My background and training is in electrical engineering, with two years of pre-med. I could never accept something as simply a belief, and always had to convert it into a known by a traditional scientific method. When something happens, it's interesting, but it may not be a reality. Statistically, the third, fourth, and fifth time it occurs, you can verify it.

That's what happened to me. It took me a full year to convert a series of events, and verify it to produce a reality for me, and that was the out-of-body state, which I discussed in my book *Journeys Out of the Body*, published some 25 years ago.

It 1956, my company was looking for some diversification. We decided to do research into how people learn during sleep, and to attempt accelerated learning methods. Our company was one of the leaders in the use of sound, and we set up an R&D department to research the area. That's how it started.

I was in our research lab, going thorough a sound session and noticed this peculiar vibrational state happening to my body as I was about to go into a sleep state. It didn't hurt. It wasn't a physical shaking. So it couldn't come under a seizure or an epileptic disorder. So what was it? As I would lie down to sleep it would begin to occur. We know much more about it now, but at the time I would resist it, and sit up and let it fade.

NF: Did you feel an electrical feeling in your body?

RM: No, it didn't feel electrical or physical. It felt sort of like a paralysis. We went through a number of studies. After a while I'd wait until it would just get over, so I could go to sleep, even when I wasn't in the lab. Very likely it was caused by the experiments we were doing in the lab, but of the 60 or so people in the study, no one else experienced the phenomenon. So I didn't have anything to gauge it by. We stopped the program because of what was happening to me.

This sensation happened to periodically for the next couple of years, and I always would simply will myself

to get out of it.

One night, after about 15 runs of waiting for it to get over so I could go to sleep, I had my first recognizable OBE. On that fateful Friday in 1958, as I lying in bed waiting for the vibrations to stop, I thought, "Ah, the cold front has come through. There'd be a lot of northwest wind up at Berksboro, where I was doing sail plane flying." I was thinking how nice the thermals would be in addition to the ridge lifts. That's when I found myself bouncing against something.

I was bouncing against what looked like an odd flat floor, with what looked

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like a fountain sticking up out of it. I turned around and realized I was bouncing up against the ceiling, and that the "fountain" was the chandelier hanging down! I looked down and saw that it was my bedroom. I thought, "This is a strange dream," but I wasn't frightened.

I looked down at the bed, and there was my wife in bed, and there was someone in bed with her. I thought in an amused way, "Whom would I dream to be in bed with my wife?" [laughter]. With a great shock I saw that it was me! That did frighten me. I thought I was dying and that this was part of the dying process. So I frantically "swam" through the air

and plopped back into my body. I sat up, panicked. My wife was sound asleep beside me, and everything was quiet. I didn't go back to sleep that night, and went to the doctor the next day.

I went through an intense medical examination. The doctors found no unusual physiological patterns, everything was normal, other than the fact that I was worried because I thought this was the death process. That was the first time.

Finally I got the courage to *let* it happen again. I say "let," because I wasn't consciously doing anything to make it happen. After about 10 times, over a period of 3 weeks, I realized it wasn't going to kill me. Very simply, I just lost my fear.

If I were to relax and unwind in bed, this "vibration" would begin, then all I'd have to do was to think a certain way, and I would float outward. I then began to play around with it, knowing it wasn't going to kill me. That gave me a certain freedom.

NF: Were You working with a staff of people at the time?

RM: Yes, I again started the research, and had two company people doing research full time. I told them to check it out. They were trying to find answers we hadn't even looked for, and discovered there was an underground in our culture dealing with the phenomena. One part of that underground was an infant science called parapsychology. We had not researched anything anywhere near as deep as what people had studied because we were only looking in one area. My researchers began to gather pieces of information from all over. In the early days, J.B Ryan of Duke University was one of them.

NF: Was there a change in your career then?

RM: My life's work from then on has been to convert these things into knowledge instead of beliefs. We no longer call it the out-of-body state, we now call it "phasing."

NF: Tell us about phasing.

RM: As you are now listening to me, your consciousness is focused 100 percent in time and space. However, if you were thinking, "Did I turn the coffee off before I left home," you are a little bit out of phase—a "flash" out of

phase. We do flash out of phase periodically. Daydreaming is an illustration. We all flicker in and out. Typically, over 15 percent of one's consciousness is in some non-physical condition at all times. One of key phases that is under conscious control is meditation or contemplation. That is when 25 percent or more of "you" is in another state, by your willing it so.

There are other ways of phasing, caused by injury, alcohol and drugs, and forms of psychosis. Schizophrenia is a classic example. These are where you have a split personality. In a split personality, another part of you is experiencing or doing something else that does not coincide with your physical body, which causes problems.

NF: When you say "you," what do you mean?

RM: I mean the person who is experiencing this. It's mind, not just consciousness. It's the part of the mind that is applying consciousness. Consciousness is a thing that inhabits a physical body, driven and controlled by the mind. There is a very valid purpose to why it is that way.

You're focusing here, because you're living here and you're experiencing here. But, because of what we are we can't help but begin to experience something beyond this physical consciousness.

NF: You recently developed a program called *Going Home*. There's a lot of concern with the plague that's upon us now, with increasing deaths. Where is "home?"

RM: It depends entirely upon the individual. There's so much involved. Only you know what your home is. These are products of our belief systems. We've had various ones throughout, such as you had in India. Your "home" may be different than say that of a born-again Christian. One's "home" is different when one gathers the experiences to make it different. There's an old song called, *Show Me The Way To Go Home*. Home means not in the physical sense, but it's symbolic. This yearning to go home is maybe what triggers our scientists to explore things like the moon. They feel that home is out there, not in

here.

The *Going Home* program was designed to ease the trauma that people have attached to physical death. While it's aimed at terminal cases, it's as important to that person's support group—family, friends, loved ones and care-givers. They suffer as much as the individual during the death process. It goes through a sequence of which we know very well.

First, through the phasing process we are getting rid of the fear of death. The method in itself gets them into a consciousness state where they know that they survive physical death. It's

RM: We've had a program that we conduct at the Institute called *Life-line* where our trained staff learn to retrieve people who have just died and don't know what to do.

NF: Retrieve people??

RM: Yes. They've just died, and they're bewildered. They're shocked and traumatized. We've had twenty-five such programs over the past four years, and there have been fifteen people who have made at least five retrievals of people who have died, and have escorted them to this place called "Focus 27." It's a park, and it's not our creation, believe me. They are there to get over the trauma of death. We escort them there to rest and recuperate, and figure out what they are going to do next.

NF: It sounds like a psychic tour service.

RM: [laughter] It's exactly that. There is so religious space there. What often happens is after they recuperate from the trauma, they will then go to the belief system territories. If they are a catholic, they'll go to the "golden gates," or are escorted there.

NF: What if one was a rapist and knew they had done bad, and would have eternal hell?

RM: I am not an authority on that. It depends on what they do as they cool off from the death process. Then they can think about it. There are counselors, but they don't call themselves that, who are human, who help people get over these kinds of things.

NF: So, you say growth and awareness continues out of the body?

RM: Absolutely.

NF: How is this knowledge retained? In our physical form we have brains that act as computer hardware which we are able to program. It sounds like you are speaking of the akashic records of Eastern thought.

RM: There is an energy field that permeates time-space. It is not of time-space. It's been labeled many things by various religions and philosophers. Its a very applicable type of energy. We tried to find a neutral label for it that wouldn't get into loaded religious connotations. So we



Robert A. Monroe

not a religious belief, they get right to the knowledge. The moment they get to that, the fear of death disappears, since they learn they do survive physical death.

If someone listening to these tapes is not terminally ill, listening won't kill them. It's going through a process of knowing that you survive physical death. Once that happens, the death process then becomes interesting, as opposed to something fearful or traumatic.

NF: In your new book, *Ultimate Journey*, you talk about a place called the "park." Tell us about this.

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call it the "M-Field." We went through the alphabet to try to find a simple label. You'd be surprised on how there's "R-Fields," "X-Fields," etc.

This energy field is where all these patterns are stored. We are a matrix within that "M-Field." Our problem is that we have no way to measure this scientifically. We don't yet have the tools. We only have the mind-brain. Oh, and there are animals of course. There are hidden agenda type things with animals, but they're using the same thing. This energy field penetrates our world continually, yet we are unable to identify and measure it.

Some things we have done are find applications of it, and train people in it. That's what our programs at the Institute do.

NF: In your book you also talk about an "executive committee," which I found difficult to comprehend. Are you talking about one soul and many bodies that we've visited?

RM: It's hard to believe, but it was as late as 1990, that I was forced to explore myself. I discovered, through my great astonishment, that I—the non-physical me-am composed of literally hundreds of previous life personalities and experiences. If we call it reincarnation that implies a law that forces you to do it. What "forces" one to come back into another life is addiction!

It's our choice. I don't look upon it as karma. That law of karma is really *you*. For example, if there were something I didn't get a chance to do in this life, I would get to do it in another life.

A classic illustration is my mother. My mother was an medical doctor. She had four children, of which I was one. She was also the wife of a college professor. She got very busy, and eventually had to drop her medical practice. There was one thing she was never able to do in this life, but once a year. At Christmas she'd bring out a cello, which she played quite well. She'd play it at Christmas and then she'd put it away.

She died in her mid-eighties. I went to see her before she died in 1969. I had sent her a copy of the *Journeys Out of the Body* manuscript, and she wrote me saying she'd like to talk to me about it. We were talking

on a Sunday night, when all of a sudden, her eyes rolled up into her head and she went, "Ahh", then she exhaled, but her eyes stayed rolled back.

I thought, "There she goes." But after about thirty seconds her breath came back, her eyes opened, and she looked at me and said, "That was very interesting." I found out, that after sending her the manuscript, she had been practicing phasing. She could deliberately go out of her body, and she told me she had established a "beachhead."

She said that when she died, her sister and brother would be waiting for her. Interestingly enough, the following Tuesday, as I was heading for the office, I felt her presence about 8:15 in the morning. Just to prove her

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point, she reached over and squeezed my knee. I couldn't see her or anything, but I could feel here pressure. She was saying good-by.

Five years later, we found out, that one year after her death, she was a one-year-old in a village in Italy. We got her name, address, in a non-physical investigation. We did find out that in that village there was a one-year-old girl that fit the name we had discovered in our non-physical investigation. Five years later we discovered that she was amazing, and attracted a lot of attention as a child violinist.

So, she went back to do the thing she was unable to do in this life.

NF: You're saying that the earth plane is a place for us to learn...
RM: Absolutely!

NF: Yet, when you're outside this body you also learn. I once asked the entity Lazarus, "You've not in a body. What about touch, sex and sensations like eating a strawberry?" He said they could achieve that at levels we couldn't comprehend. So, why do we ever come back to the earth plane?

RM: A very basic reason. There are certain things that are unique here. We learn manipulation of energy without knowing how much and how valuable it is. As you're talking on the phone now, you are manipulating energy to do this.

Just by waving your hand you are using bio-chemical energy, electrical energy, etc. These are exquisitely valuable along the energy spectrum. The learning and application of energy fields is what the earth plane experience is all about.

NF: You talk about a thing called the "human plus." How do we achieve this?

RM: By moving away from fear and the things that restrict us. Once you begin to realize that you are learning these things in ways that you don't know you are—things that you have been doing physically can be applied in many non-physical ways. Let's say you've learned to walk, and then you can wave your wings and you can fly. All you have to do is create wings.

NF: In your book, you were talking to all of your many selves. Different selves were coming through. Are you also a channel?

RM: I have one personality of mine that needles me, saying, "Why don't you step aside and let me come in, you could be a tremendous channel." [laughter]. He was of a civilization over 200,000 years ago that's totally away from our type. No, I don't channel, not in that sense. One of my early personalities is from the sixth century. I was a court jester. So if I want to be funny, I let that court jester do his act.

NF: What can you say about channeling?

RM: Let me put it this way, the ones that I've met, I have believed. I don't know for sure, but I have some ideas about it. I think they are other person-

alities from when that individual lived before.

NF: Do you think that's true in every case?

RM: That's my opinion. There may be an external source that's worked its way into it. Three of the more prominent channels originated here at our Institute.

NF: Who were you when you weren't?

RM: You're asking about my point of origin?

NF: You know you've had a hundred bodies, maybe a 1000 bodies. But what was the point when you weren't in a body?

RM: I've given that a lot of thought, quite naturally. Who I was, was a matrix of energy. That was a part of this whole creative process. It's in my new book. Where I know many things I didn't know before. I had ignored this whole business of having multiple personalities and multiple previous lives. I was reminded of it, but I ignored it. I was forced to do it because in order to do some other things, I had to get that knowledge.

NF: Tell us about some of your current research at the Monroe Institute?

RM: We are a so-called advanced civilization that spends a third of its life without having any solid exploration of it from the viewpoint of what it really is. Our culture knows virtually nothing about the sleep state.

We've produced much data around what it is, and what it isn't. We developed the idea from this strange phenomena that was happening to me. We now know the greatest quantum leap in our culture would be to really know about sleep. We've found that's what we've been doing all these years, is having people establish these altered states of consciousness within the sleep state. What we call "Focus-10"—the mind awake the body asleep, is where your consciousness has moved into another state of awareness. The EEG patterns, and the biochemical patterns are so identical to the EEG patterns of stage one sleep, you can't tell the difference.

NF: So, you're saying that to move into these states when you're

awake, you don't need to physically go onto a bed and lie down. You can go into this sleep state any time?

RM: Our contemporary methods of measurement indicate that. What we have in "Focus-21" is the equivalent of the "stage four" sleep state. We've had people in the out-of-body state, who take the EEG test, and people in a normal sleep state, and they are identical. The implication is that there's so much more of us in this sleep state, that if we would study this scientifically, this whole area of consciousness offers so much prospect, it really makes it a New Frontier.

NF: The strength of so many religions seems to be to maintain

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society. In some groups, Buddhists and Christians talk about penance or retribution, if we don't do good in this life. Your work seems to say that this doesn't matter.

RM: It depends. We go by certain rules or laws that aren't man-made at all, that do apply, not only here, but to whatever you do after you are no longer physical. There are simple basic laws. One is change. Change is just as valid after you die as it is here. Another is Cause and Effect, with subheads of action-reaction, and authority-responsibility.

NF: But, if we know that we don't die, what's wrong with me going out, like Adolph Hitler, and killing six million Jews and helping them to evolve. Couldn't we look

at Hitler as a hero for helping them to evolve?

RM: [laughter] No we wouldn't, because of cause and effect. If you were Hitler and killed 6 million people, they'd be waiting for you. [laughter]

NF: Are you saying that there are people on the other side who are not that conscious?

RM: I'm saying that it's cause and effect, don't you see?

NF: You're saying that these people were in their own process, doing their own learning, and he pulled the plug on them.

RM: That's right, and when he gets there, it's a form of hell.

NF: They can't beat you or whip you. What happens?

RM: They can make it uncomfortable for you. That's a polite way of saying it.

NF: Couldn't one come back into a body and clean their act up?

RM: You could. But you don't have to come back into a physical body to do that though.

NF: What does your daily workday or workload look like?

RM: I'm in a different state of being these days. I made some very profound mistakes in assessment.

About 3 years ago my wife Nancy contracted cancer. It's for this occasion that I put together the Lifeline program. It was sort of my death insurance, so that we would still be in relationship after she died. Two years ago last August, she did die. I didn't take the death process very well, because we were so tremendously close.

When the hospital called to tell me she was dying, I rushed over. When I got there she wasn't in her body. She was going through "Chain Stokes" breathing, which meant the last part of life. I made a terrible mistake of not being more familiar with the death process. As a result about a week later I tried to get in touch with her. I "went out," where I knew where I could find her. In doing so I encountered an overwhelming emotional impact. It was like a mental-emotional explosion. I couldn't handle it. So I came back. About two weeks later, I tried it again and simply

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couldn't handle the huge impact: I realized I had to make up my mind, to either complete things here, or if I continued this, the next time I wouldn't be able to come back.

I set up a shield and cut off my OBE ability. What's holding me here is that there is something I still have to do. Unless I put up this shield, I wouldn't be able to do it. This has cut off all of my non-physical activity.

NF: So, you've not "gone out" since then?

RM: I haven't been to the "other side" since September of 1992. I'm now devoid of, not only of Nancy, but all of the other contacts and communications. I can open it up, but I know I wouldn't return here.

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NF: Is it fear?

RM: It has nothing to do with fear. There is some other process that I need to do before I can go.

NF: You know that but you don't know what it is?

RM: That's correct. I don't know what it is, but it isn't "going home."

NF: You realized that you wouldn't be doing anymore work here. You'd die.

RM: Yes.

NF: What will you be doing? How is the book going?

RM: It's in its fourth printing. I don't know whether you're aware of some strange events are taking place nationally. As a person who has worked in this field, I'm aware of prime time TV exhibiting some very strange characteristics. For example NBC and PBS have had a 2 hour programs on angels, and CBS now has a series called

Touched By An Angel. A producer just wouldn't do that unless the vice president of network programming weren't encouraging it.

I was a vice president of network programming, so I know. They wouldn't do such controversial things. And there have been so many, near-death experience specials, and they are continuing to come. They got into CBS if you can believe that.

NF: Do you believe we are in the end times of our species?

RM: No, not in end times of the species. We did some future time research back in the seventies. There is a massive change about to come. Either humankind will have a quantum leap in consciousness, or it will plateau out and will, in a relatively

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short time, no longer be the dominant species here.

If you're objective, you'll see it all over the world.

NF: Any closing statement?

RM: I say this because of the label of your publication—New Frontier Magazine. To me, the great future is knowing how to apply, in all areas, this energy field that happens accidentally. We use it, yet we don't know how to really apply it. We now have the opportunity. We have the mind and the technology to do it.

The indicators are that our promotional media, mainly television, is getting into this kind of stuff. What's the force behind that?

NF: Thank you so much for the time you've taken to talk with us.

RM: It was my pleasure.

